

Review

The journal of
Blind Veterans UK

March 2020



Join our gang

Our Intro Week at Llandudno

Inside:

Off piste – life on our ski trip

Trooping the Colour 2020 – details inside

Home at last – the Ancient
Mariners make it to the finish



Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss

An eye opener

Hello, and a warm, albeit windy, welcome to your March edition of Review. In the time that I've been here – which is astonishingly two years this September – I had until recently, never been to an Introduction Week where new Members visit one of our two Centres, and begin their journeys with us.

I was lucky enough to be invited to attend one of these weeks at our Llandudno Centre, and see first-hand the change that our veterans undergo. I had been assured that it was a journey worth seeing, so between myself and my colleague Laura, we hotfooted it up to North Wales to be there from start to finish not knowing what to expect.

What we found was a microcosm of what our charity is about. It was a week where we watched our new Members flourish under the guidance, kindness and care of our staff. Many were keen to try such new activities as archery, meditation and yoga, and found themselves with a more positive outlook within a few days.

I had been told that the climax of the week was the celebratory dinner where the attendees talked about

their journeys during their time at the Centre and was very keen to hear their individual stories.

I wasn't disappointed - suffice to say, the dinner was a very emotional occasion, with more than a few lumps in the throat as the Members talked about their personal progress in those few short days.

It was a real honour to be witness to the start of the journey for these veterans, and I hope the article manages to convey some of the emotions that both me and Laura experienced. If you are a new Member, and haven't yet been to an Introduction Week, then I'd firmly recommend it.

Until next month, enjoy your magazine. 🍷

Did you work for the railways? If so, we'd love to hear from you. My contact details are on page 51.

Chris Gilson
Editor



On the cover

Our new Members during their Introduction Week



Determined to work together

Your message from your Chief Executive,
Major General (rtd) Nick Caplin CB

I was travelling back from France by ferry with my wife Isobel as Storm Dennis completed his national washing programme. The wind was howling, the sea lumpy and I was amazed, surprised and impressed that the Captain had decided to do the journey. As long-time veterans of the Caledonian MacBrayne Minch crossing from the mainland of Scotland to the Outer Hebrides, notoriously one of the roughest sea crossings in the world, we are no strangers to a lively boat.

Indeed I proposed to Isobel on the windward rail in the teeth of a gale many moons ago (whereupon she said 'yes, can we go inside now?'), but we had yet to experience such a crossing in the Channel. Our voyage though, was as nothing compared to the communities being devastated by the weather in Wales and across the rest of the country.

Dennis came fast on the heels of Storm Ciara the previous weekend, which brought unusually high winds and heavy rainfall to large parts of the country. Sadly, both storms resulted in lost lives and the clear up will be both lengthy and expensive. In times of challenge people pull together and it has been gratifying to see the can-do, positive attitude of communities across the country as they work to meet these new challenges. They have helped fellow citizens deal with this latest adversity, with a weather-eye for the next climate challenge that might come their way.

“Dennis came fast on the heels of Storm Ciara the previous weekend, which brought unusually high winds and heavy rainfall”

Fears and concerns

The storms were not the only challenge facing the country. In early February, Brighton was one of the first parts of the country to experience Coronavirus, and there have been real fears and concerns regarding the ease with which this spreads.

It was a good test for both our Centres to ensure that our procedures for dealing with viral infections are up to date and easy to swing into action. As I write, there are the reported glimmerings of hope that the global

incidence of this sinister virus might be declining, and my fingers are crossed that this isn't a false dawn.

My apologies if this is deep material to be pondering, but it has left me focusing on the issue of uncertainty as it affects the charity and, in particular, our readiness for the war blind of the future. Global uncertainty, of whatever cause can lead to unexpected results including conflict.

When that next conflict happens, wherever it happens, it will bring



Caption: Wave in Lysekil, Sweden, during Storm Dennis

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a new influx of people who have been blinded in the service of their country. The causes might vary, with lasers and explosions playing a greater part perhaps, but the effect is the same. We need to ensure that we are ready to help rebuild the lives of the future war blind as we have been for the past 105 years. This is why work that we are embarking on with our US counterparts is so exciting - and so vital.

The progress being made

In January this year, the President of the Blinded Veterans Association



Caption: Nick Caplin

(BVA) in the USA made a statement to Congress on the progress being made to battle blindness among that country's veterans.

In his statement, he referred to his vision that the Blind Veterans UK research department should become the research arm of the BVA going forward, conducting research on their behalf and with US funding support.

This is a tremendously exciting opportunity and we are working hard to make that vision a reality. In the same month, an agreement was signed in the Pentagon for the US and UK to work together as part of a Joint Ocular Trauma Task Force, the purpose of which is to raise awareness of vision trauma, and to improve the prevention, diagnosis, mitigation, treatment and rehabilitation of eye injuries and brain-injury associated vision loss.

Blind Veterans UK is playing a leading role in making this important bi-lateral cooperation with our principal ally a reality. This is big and this is important. We are determined to work together to advance science and knowledge, to spread awareness among the seats of power and to ensure that, from the perspective of blind veterans, we are properly prepared for whatever this uncertain world presents to us in the future. 🍀



Ancient Mariners arrival - L-R Steve Hughes, Mike Winn, John Moorhouse, Guy Munnoch

Ancient Mariners cross the line

It's celebrations all round as veteran-crewed rowing team crosses the finishing line

With a combined age of 257 years and 10 days, The Ancient Mariners crew of four - Guy Munnoch, 67, from Lovedean, Mike Winn, 64, from Frome, Steve Hughes, 61, from Helensburgh,

and John Moorhouse, 63, from Lymm - set off from La Gomera in the Canary Islands on 12 December and completed their 3,000 mile Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge →



Ancient Mariners Pre-race

arriving in English Harbour, Antigua on 30 January.

Previously, the Guinness World Record for the oldest crew of four rowing the Atlantic Ocean was a team with a combined age of 223 years and 211 days, who completed the race in 52 days.

Rowing a two hours on, two hours off shift pattern for 24 hours a day, the Ancient Mariners overcame seasickness in massive waves, storms, salt sores, blisters, dehydration, sleep deprivation and exhaustion to reach Antigua after 49 days, 8 hours and 40 minutes at sea in their 8.7 metre Hitachi Capital (UK) PLC sponsored Grey Escape vessel.

To complete the Talisker Whisky

“The brilliant teamwork and camaraderie amongst all the crew has pulled us through tough moments”

Atlantic Challenge, the Ancient Mariners made around 1.5 million combined oar strokes eating only dehydrated food whilst making their own drinking water on-board during their endeavour.

The record breaking adventure has raised over £20,000 for two charities - Blind Veterans UK and Open Arms Malawi, with £5,000 donated by Hitachi Capital (UK) PLC.

Guy Munnoch, one of the team and Chairman of Hitachi Capital (UK) PLC, said: “It has been an unbelievably demanding, life changing experience for all of us, requiring immense mental and physical endurance.

“Faced with daily daunting challenges, the brilliant teamwork and camaraderie amongst all the crew has pulled us through tough moments. We also drew enormous strength from witnessing nature at its rawest and most remote with some amazing marine life sightings, Atlantic sunsets and sunrises and the spectacular night skies.” 🍷

In Your Community

Will Phillips' work goes on display at Brighton

Fareham-based Member Will Phillips has had an exhibition of his photography put up on display at our Brighton Centre.

The gallery features some of his interesting abstracts as well as more conventional images. It's featured in the Pool Corridor and showcases his work over the last few years.

The exhibition will be on display until July for the Centre's photography week. →



Caption: Will's work on display at the Brighton Centre

Gilbert's 95th birthday trip to Civil Nuclear Constabulary

Member Gilbert Brown celebrated turning 95 earlier this month with a trip that was organised by his befriender and volunteer Andy Bainbridge.

Andy is a firearms instructor at



Caption: Will Phillips

the Civil Nuclear Constabulary in Aldershot, and organised for Gilbert to attend one of their training sessions.

Andy has been Gilbert's Befriender since November last year and they meet every week for lunch. Andy also helps Gilbert with his gardening and other household jobs. Thank you Andy, and Happy Birthday Gilbert.

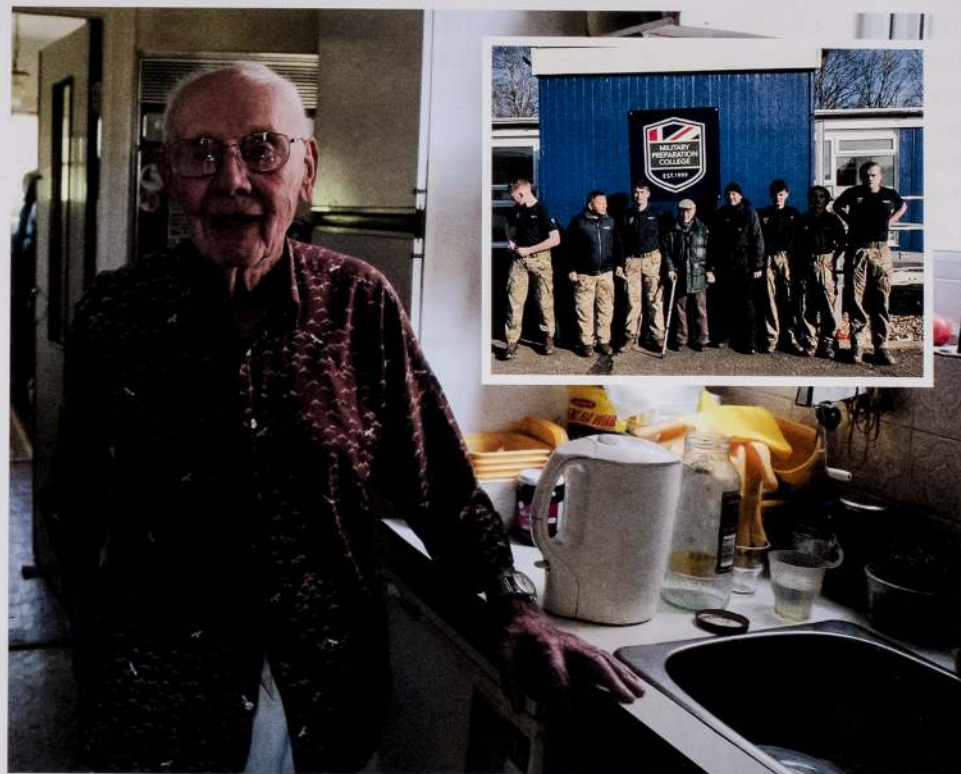
The 2020 Summer Camp at HMS Sultan

This year's summer camp at HMS Sultan will take place from 7-15 August.

Once again, there are a limited number of places for Blind Veterans UK Members due to Service accommodation constraints, but please don't let that put you off applying, as we will accommodate as many veterans as we are able to.

For many years, Members of Blind Veterans UK have assembled at Lee on Solent, Hampshire for the annual Summer Camp sponsored by the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm.

From the late 1940s (until 1996) this was held at HMS Daedalus, when we transferred to our present location.



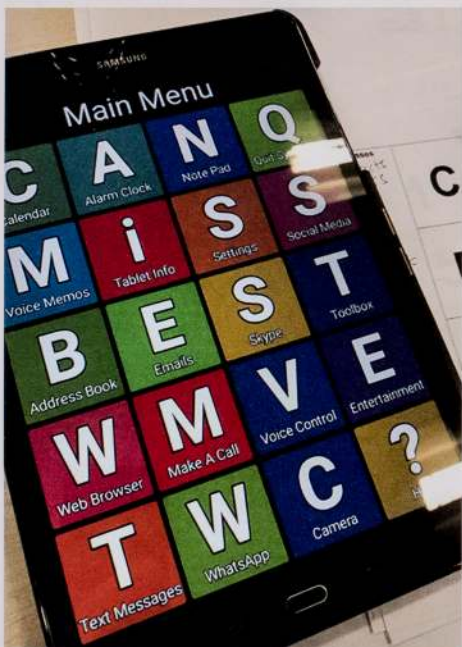
Caption: Gilbert Brown, before and during his birthday visit with the constabulary team

There has been a long association with members of the Fleet Air Arm Field Gun Crew (FAAFGC) who acted as helpers (known affectionately as 'dogs'). They attended the camp on completion of the competition at the Royal Tournament, Earls Court. The FAAFGC Association continues to support the camp following the demise of the Royal Tournament in 1999.

We have endeavoured for many years to create a summer camp 'family' and to maintain that ethos we do have Members who regularly participate. We are also very careful to ensure that places are offered to new applicants each year. There are no boundaries with regard to age or physical ability, but we do check with the Welfare Officers to ensure suitability. →

The Summer Camp is funded through donations, fundraising by the FAAFGC and our local community. The campers are charged a nominal fee that goes towards insurance, transportation (visits during camp), activities for the camp and licences to use Service facilities.

The committee has two Blind Veterans UK Member representatives who are encouraged to voice the opinions and wishes of the campers in the planning of the event. The application list will close on 1 May, and everyone will be informed if they



Caption: Synaptic-equipped tablet

have been successful or not. We look forward to receiving your applications and meeting up in August.

■ **Applications are to be made to Andy Salter either by telephone on 01329 283 928 or 07932 267 782. You can also email Andy at: A.salter639@virgimedia.com**

Tablet time for our volunteers

Some of our South-West based Volunteers in Community 7 had an



Caption: IT training in Community 7

IT training day where they learned about the Synaptic-equipped tablets that many of our Members use.

They also experienced an interactive session using other assistive technology. This training means that they can help our Members with any technology-based problems in person when they go and visit them.

Combined Veterans Climbing Week 2020

Following the success of the inaugural Combined Veterans Climbing Week in 2019, we are delighted to be supporting the event again this year. Last year's attendees enjoyed a week of camaraderie, challenge and fun.

This year's climbing week will be held at the International Climbing Arena Ratho, which is situated 10 miles from Edinburgh City Centre and is the world's largest indoor climbing centre. There are routes to suit all abilities from absolute beginners to Olympic level athletes.

The event will run from 1-5 June, with climbers arriving in Edinburgh on the evening of 31 May. There are 20 places available, with attendees coming from both Blind Veterans UK

and Scottish War Blinded. There will be qualified coaches in attendance and sighted guides available for those who require them.

Attendees do not have to have climbed before, but a basic level of fitness will be required. If you are unsure whether you would be physically able to complete this week please contact Member Garry Cowan on gazcowan1981@gmail.com or **07931 345 686** to discuss this further.

Many of last year's attendees have gone on to become competent climbers and some of them will be there to supervise and provide support. Accommodation will be provided in a local Premier Inn and transport will be provided to and from the climbing arena. There will also be a variety of evening activities in and around the Edinburgh area.

There will be a minimum cost of £300 for this week, and this can be paid personally or through local fundraising. If you would like to fundraise please get in touch and we can provide support with this.

■ **To express an interest, please contact Garry or Community Team Leader Scott Cassidy at scott.cassidy@blindveterans.org.uk.**



Mad or what?

Your chaplain **Clare Callanan** looks at the humble hare, and what it means as a symbol in faith

What does the month of March, Paderborn Cathedral, Alice in Wonderland, the Silk Route, and some churches in Devon all have in common?

Come on...have a think. Don't give up just yet! OK I'll tell you. It's hares.

At this time of year in March, the 'mad March hares' can be seen in spring indulging in their chasing around and 'boxing' behaviour as part of their

courtship rituals. We saw them a lot where I used to live in Germany.

Paderborn cathedral has the Dreihäsenfenster, a beautiful window depicting three hares carved in stone with only three ears between them, forming a triangle. The three hares are interlocked in a circle in threefold rotational symmetry and each of the ears are shared by two hares, so that only three ears are shown.

Alice in Wonderland, written by Lewis Carroll, features the March Hare who sits with the Hatter and Alice at a tea party.

The Silk Road played an important role in the diffusion of the Three Hares motif. It was via this trade route that the Three Hares symbol found its way into the western part of China and it is also evident in Turkmenistan, Iran, Egypt, Syria, Germany, France, and England. The objects on which the Three Hares motif have been found include glass, ceramics, coins, and textiles.

Some churches in Devon have the same motif as Paderborn Cathedral in windows and in wooden 'bosses' in the roof. There is a tour route of these churches you can follow to find them all.

Symmetrical simplicity

So next time you see a hare or mention 'mad March hares this month, think on this creature that has featured in other cultures for thousands of years, including the North European Saxon goddess Eostre...Easter takes its name from her. The humble hare, used in a symbol that has been valued in Christianity as a representation of the Trinity, with its symmetrical simplicity dancing and running around in an eternal cycle.

And so my point is? Well, apart from being interesting from an art, and symbology, and a "did you know?" perspective, I think it is important to acknowledge the history, legends and narratives around so much of our symbols and sayings, in order to widen our understanding. So often we are able to start uncovering 'layers' of meanings and find links and connections which can enhance our wellbeing and views on life.

As we ask questions and follow clues, we access intuitive and spiritual aspects of our living as unique and created human beings, living in community with each other across time and location. 🌸



Caption: Clare Callanan

Return to the kitchen - your helpful hints

In the final installment of our cookery articles, our rehabilitation team has provided you with a helpful list of hints and ways that will help you get the most out of your kitchen



Caption: Liquid level indicator

Here's our Top 30 culinary hints and tips.

- 1. Liquid level indicators** – these highlight the contrast of liquid coming up the cup, or use a bright coloured ping pong ball instead. The ball is also a great indicator for tea pots. Just remember to avoid dipping finger tips in, as hot liquid will cause injury.
- 2. Pouring** – use a tray or do it over the draining board to catch spills.
- 3. Don't pour in mid-air** – position the kettle or jug spout on the rim of the mug or dish before pouring. A bump-on under the spout can help.



Caption: Dycem jar opener

- 4. Spreading** – if you can't see bread on sideboard then colour contrast will help, so you can spread on the bread, not the board.
- 5. Spreading techniques** – use a teaspoon, place the butter, jam or item to spread in the centre of the bread, then spread out to the sides. You can also start in one corner – spread down and systematically move across.
- 6.** Sharp knives are safer knives, you use less pressure so less chance of slipping. Cut-resistant gloves are available which will reduce the risk.
- 7.** Get a good pair of tongs to handle hot food rather than flipping with a fish slice or a similar implement. Use them

to get your toast out of the toaster but turn the power off first

8. If you have poor dexterity opening jars, then a 'Dycem' jar opener makes this easier. When opening cans, if you find a traditional can opener difficult, the One Touch can opener is an easier alternative.

9. Boiling – when you can't tell when water is boiling, a boil alert will rattle in the bottom of the pan.

10. The bigger the pot, the better, as this will stop spills or overflows and give you plenty of room to add extra water or ingredients.

11. Clean as you go – for example, get rid of peel quickly so you don't make the mistake of adding it to your food.

12. When peeling, place a newspaper underneath where you are peeling. When done, fold up the newspaper and all the peel will be contained, ready for the compost or bin.

13. Measuring – use an egg cup or tablespoon to measure quantities of oil. Or just use a splash.

14. Frying – If you don't know when the oil is hot, drop a small piece of food into the pan and if it sizzles, it's ready to use. →



Caption: Slow cooker

15. Elastic bands placed around your food is a winning solution, they can identify certain tins and can be used in the fridge and freezer.

16. Presentation isn't always important, knowing you can make yourself a meal is much more important.

17. Use a wire basket inside saucepans so you don't need to carry hot water backwards and forwards, and it's easy to drain as well.

18. Slow cookers are a helpful gadget to have in the kitchen. They are,

- Cheap to buy
- Easy to use
- Economical to heat food

- Fresh food alternative to ready meals
- Relatively safe as there is no naked flame, they heat very slowly and require minimal attention when cooking.

19. George Foreman grills are also safe and efficient.

- They are cheap to buy
- No need to use cooker grill
- Cook a variety of meats including steak, chicken, sausages, and chops.
- Use wooden tongs to turn meat over
- Healthy eating as fat and water drains away

20. Lekue Silicone cooking trays are also suitable for those with visual impairment.

- Use in the microwave
- Just add vegetables and meat or fish
- Cooks a complete meal quickly and cleanly

21. Create a folder of commonly used items, containing the packaging along with very simple large print instructions. For example, the front of a box containing a microwave meal with the relevant instructions in big accessible print - the box can then be matched up when you next cook it.

22. There is often no need for a talking measuring jug and talking scales as you can weigh a jug of water to find out how much is in there.

23. Timing the cooking of food - you can use your watch or clock. There are a variety of large face or audible timers, even talking ones.

24. Use widely available cooking sauces for all dishes. If you can only get a big jar, check the packaging to see if it can be frozen. Empty it out into a container and defrost when you want to use it.

25. If you do have food that you cannot use then think about composting it. Certain foods cannot be used otherwise it will smell. Leave it for a while and you will have ready-made compost for all the new vegetables you can grow. Details on compost bins are available from your local council.



Caption: Food timer - large display

26. Be organised - as the saying goes 'a place for everything and everything in its place'. Group and store similar items near each other. Don't move or leave ingredients in a different place.

27. Another boiling tip is to place your ingredients into the cold water first, rather than the bubbling and splattering hot water.

28. On top of timing the cooking of food correctly, use your sense of smell, as many foods smell a certain way when cooked.

29. Think about food hygiene - because you may be using a coloured chopping board for contrast, chop and peel your vegetables first before preparing any raw meat. Once you have done this, put the knife and board to one side ready for washing.

30. Apps for reading - if you have a smartphone, you could use the camera, take a picture and magnify it to read instructions. You could try Be My Eyes or Seeing AI, which is available just for iPhones.

- **If you need any assistance or advice with skills in the kitchen then please contact the Member Support Hub Helpline on 01273 391 447 or email: mesh@blindveterans.org.uk**

Sticky fingers

Our resident cook, **Penny Melville-Brown** shows you how to make rhubarb and pineapple jam



Caption: Penny (right) with friend

This summer jam is amazingly easy to make, and is probably closer to an American "jelly". It's perfect for scones, toast and more and you can see how I made it on-screen at bit.ly/2SXPFpV

Method

- Place the rhubarb, sugar and pineapple in a pan and simmer until all the fruit is softened, stirring to prevent the sugar catching on the base of the pan
- Add the jelly crystals and stir until dissolved
- Pour in to warm sterilised jars and put on lids

Ingredients

20 ounces/ 570g	rhubarb, leaves removed, washed and cut in to half inch pieces
8 ounces/225g	sugar
9 ounces/260g	tin of crushed pineapple
4 ounces/100g	sachet of strawberry jelly crystals

My tips:

Because this recipe uses gelatine to achieve the traditional jam "set", there's no need to use a thermometer or boil the fruit and sugar too long - which helps it retain the original flavours. This was certainly originally an American recipe as the measurements originally were five cups of the chopped rhubarb and one cup of the sugar.



Caption: Steve and friend

Firmly on-piste

It was the annual Blind Veterans UK ski trip recently - Member **Jan Price** talks about what it means to our Members and the fun that was had

The friend who encouraged me to become a Member of Blind Veterans UK, and who is a guide on our annual ski trip once told me that he couldn't describe it.

"What rubbish" I thought then, but having just returned from my second ski trip I know exactly what he means.

There are no words that can describe what this trip means to so many.

To the Members that take part, it is socialising with like-minded people who have the same, sometimes odd, sense of humour but share the determination, challenges and attitude to overcoming adversity to achieve individual goals. →

Their guides are humbled to be able to assist and share that moment of achievement – be it clamping skis to feet for the first time, battling the fear of a 'red run', or flying with freedom down a black slope. Everyone's achievement is met with the same joy and happiness.

For our friends and family it is being able to 'see' the person behind the daily challenges and adversity who can, for a few days, quite literally enjoy life to the full.

Starting out

This year our club flew out from Gatwick Airport, with the majority of people staying the previous night at

the airport Travelodge. My journey to the airport was uneventful; I travelled independently on the train from Grantham. Having checked in, I headed to that regular meeting place – the bar, spending time catching up with friends old and new while enjoying a few beers. That's not to mention the most amazing of fish finger sandwiches and chips prior to the arrival of my best friend, Marianne, who was accompanying me for our early start on the Saturday.

British Airways (BA) as always excelled themselves, providing a bespoke check-in area for the group, and we were soon smoothly through into departures and incredibly fortunate

to have access to the BA lounge - you can't beat bacon rolls and prosecco at 7am. With much laughter, joviality and expectation we boarded our flight, and safely arrived at Marco Polo airport in Venice, Italy. The weather was glorious and we sat soaking up some sun when our senior guide asked, "Has anyone brought over a case which isn't theirs?"

Oops, that generally means one of our team's bags was missing – whose? Well none other than the ski club's treasurer; Mark Brewin. With bag still AWOL we transferred to the resort – three hour's travel, and it was at the mid-point stop I found that my guide for this year was Sam. It is your guide's

responsibility to introduce themselves and then to ensure they escort you around during the week.

Parish notices

During the transfer we were informed of our room number and who we were sharing with (I was roomed with Marianne). On arrival, there was no real time to unpack as with your guide, it's off to JPs, the local ski hire shop to get kitted out.

The ski club has been using JP's for many years and the staff there are absolutely brilliant with their own routine to ensure everyone gets seen in order. With boots, helmet, skis and poles, it's back to the hotel →



Caption: Catching some rays on the slopes



Caption: First steps



Caption: Steve on the ski lift

to stow equipment in very plush ski storage lockers aligned with room numbers.

Every night after dinner, there are parish notices and the obligatory 'Stavely's' – a hat, believe it or not. Now Stavely's are quite simply the epitome of 'never let the truth get in the way of a good story' (5% truth 95% embellishment) and it is given out every night for some slight misdemeanour that was generally funny. The winner... drum roll... was Mark Brewin who had lost his main luggage but by some strange fluke had packed his skiing essentials in his hand bag.

The next day, the whole crew went to



Caption: Can you see me?

Champac to get their ski legs working, take the obligatory team photo and - for those new guides, family and friends - the 'blind ski'. This is to assist the guides with understanding some of the difficulties encountered by those with limited/no sight; effectively the skier is blindfolded and they are 'talked down' the run by one of the guides. Utter respect to Marianne, who quickly volunteered for the challenge - being talked down by Sam (my guide). She got down the run in one piece, having gained a flavour of what skiing with a sight condition entailed. Sam and I spent the rest of the day going up and down the button lift playing on the blue run to see how much skiing I'd retained from last year



Caption: Spot the snow sculpted Minion

- not a lot is the answer but way more than I expected and I still couldn't turn left.

With this being only my second week ever on skis I was very tentative to start with - unfortunately I'm a perfectionist, and cannot understand for the life of me why I haven't mastered skiing in five days. With Sam's brilliant instruction and quiet persuasion, I was quickly back to the level I left last year - still without being able to turn left. Unfortunately it was soon time to head back to the hotel for dinner, the Stavely's and, in my case an early night.

Bright and sunny

Tuesday dawned bright and sunny, and it was back to Champac. We tried more 'blue' runs trying to anchor the drills, with the afternoon culminating in Sam taking up the chair lift to 'attempt' my first red run. To say I threw my teddies out of the pram would be a massive understatement, as it appeared that in this 'very scared' situation I forgot everything I'd ever been taught and turned into a gibbering heap.

After some quiet soothing talk from Sam (while I was yelling several expletives regarding a duck) I finally managed to get it together and 'survival' skied the rest of the way.

With the ski sun God smiling down on us, Tuesday dawned with clear blue skies, and back to Champac we went - back to my comfort blanket of the blue run. However Sam had different ideas, and just prior to lunch we went back to the red run and this time I nailed it.

When we got to the restaurant there were hugs all round - you have no idea what that achievement meant to me, and as such everyone joined me in my happiness.

At the restaurant, we met an ex-Army gentleman and his family who were in awe of what the ski club does, and who very nicely bought me a small beer - it's the first time I've sat outside with a beer that got colder with time. We were soon back on our skis and playing down the red run - unfortunately towards the end of the day I didn't realise how tired my legs were and after several minor falls called it a day on the slopes.

Sam decided I could now progress to the 'Bowl' and the next day we turned right out of the hotel rather than left - I'd already been to the Bowl the previous year and knew what to expect as the slopes are much busier than Champac. 🍷

■ Read part two in next month's Review.

Getting to know you

As a new Member of Blind Veterans UK you can visit one of our Centres for an Introduction Week. **Laura Weir** and **Chris Gilson** visited Llandudno to see what happens.

At the beginning of February I, Laura, travelled to the picturesque Llandudno Centre to meet 10 of our new Members who were attending their Introduction Week at the start of their journey with us.

A lot happens during the days of this special week - but briefly Introduction Weeks are designed to show what we do as a charity and are hosted at our Brighton and Llandudno Centres throughout the year. They see our veterans receive training and advice, try out new activities and have several assessments with a Rehabilitation Officer who looks at the practical needs of each individual, and identifies any training and/or equipment that they would benefit from.

Introduction weeks also offer our Members the opportunity to meet with

others in similar situations to them who face the same daily challenges. Not only does this provide many with the reassurance that they are not alone, but it also gives them the confidence and support to open up during the week. Members often bring their partners with them, as they can provide fantastic support for their other halves.

During the day, they take part in activities ranging from archery to meditation. These are designed to encourage them to try different things, as well as learn to use the sight they have. For some, this may be the first time they have done these activities since their sight loss and for others it might be their first time altogether. The Members stay at the centre during the week, have their meals together and enjoy evening entertainment, which can come in a variety of forms.

An uplifting atmosphere

Even though our veterans had only arrived at Llandudno on Sunday, when I got there on Monday afternoon, it was clear that friendships were forming already and the atmosphere within the group was uplifting and positive. During my few days accompanying them, I wanted to speak to a few of our Members to hear about their life before the charity and how they were finding the first few days.

It's at this point I should mention the role of our Rehabilitation and Training Liaison Officer Billy Baxter – himself a Member, who is based at

Llandudno. Instantly recognisable, kind and understanding of the problems new Members face, Billy takes each group under his wing as they begin their journey, being a familiar voice and companion through the week, shepherding them between activities and patiently answering their questions. Billy's reassuring presence was a mainstay throughout the week, and doubtlessly helped to settle the new arrivals in their unfamiliar surroundings.

The first activity that I watched our Members get involved in was archery, which is always



Caption: Playing on-screen games with an instructor

a popular sport. It was here that I met George who had travelled from Lincoln. George joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1950, before joining the Territorial Army. He suffers from Glaucoma and was registered blind just over a year ago. He had come to the centre on his own, as his wife Irene passed away in May last year. Although George seemed a bit shy at first, it was lovely to see him clearly enjoy the archery and open up during our conversation. He said: "The staff are great and it's been lovely to meet the other Members. I used to work in mechanical engineering so I'm used to using my hands. I would like to

be introduced to creative tasks like woodwork".

As well as the more physical activities on offer, that included three gym sessions during the week, our veterans were also introduced to meditation techniques by resident Rehabilitation and Support Worker Jinpa Thubten. I was encouraged to also get involved and joined in with the class - I can say that I left feeling very relaxed. We all sat in a circle and Jinpa talked us through the ways which we can meditate, whether it be in a quiet room or on the bus. He highlighted that it doesn't matter where or how long you meditate for, as it's all beneficial.



Caption: Billy Baxter and his flugelhorn



Caption: Physical activity is an important part of Intro Week

"During the day, they take part in a range of different activities ranging from archery to mediation"

I was sat next to Margaret who had travelled from Manchester with her husband Frank, who was diagnosed with macular degeneration three years ago. It was great to see the partners getting involved with the activities and I spoke to Margaret about how these meditation techniques could benefit her too. She said: "Frank can often get frustrated that he can't do the everyday things that he used to. It's hard for me to watch him try to do things, and not go over and help him straight away. I think meditation will help me to be more patient".

After the session, Margaret introduced me to Frank in the lounge and it was lovely to hear how much they were enjoying the introduction week so far. They told me about how they arrived from Manchester on a bus with a few of the others, and were having a great time getting to know everyone. Frank showed me the new tablet that the charity had given him. He said, "I have a training session later on in the week to be able to learn how to get the most out of it". They were both so

enthusiastic and it proved to me how beneficial these introduction weeks are for members and partners alike.

Gaining confidence

Another Member who took part in the meditation class was Gil who was attending Introduction Week with his wife. A quieter member of the group, Gil served in the Army from 1958-81 and lost his sight gradually four years ago due to cataracts and glaucoma. He told me that he struggles with sleeping at night due to his sight loss, and only has about four hours sleep a night. He said, "I definitely think that the meditation could help - I nearly dosed off in the class".

On Tuesday morning, I went to watch the gym class being led by Health and Wellbeing Practitioner, Rhian Jones. The class involved leg raises and other exercises that both Members and their partners can do at home. While watching the class, Gil sat with me and spoke about how he lived in America and London for a number of years. It was great to see how in the space of one day, a new Member had the confidence to come over and chat with someone they'd only met for the first time the day before.

I spent Tuesday afternoon in the wonderfully-decorated Member's lounge, where I introduced



myself to Les, who had come to the introduction week from Crewe. Les served in the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment from 1953-55 as part of his National Service, and lost his sight due to age related degeneration. Les told me that he was a keen gardener before he lost his sight, and used to enjoy looking after his allotment. He said: "When my wife was alive, my wife would look after the garden and I would have the allotments. When my wife got dementia, I had to lose the allotments. When my sight went I could no longer do the garden – I felt terrible".

Les wants the opportunity to learn how to garden again and use the sight he

does retain. As well as the possibility of bringing gardening back into his life, Les was also grateful to the charity for how social everyone was. He said: "It's marvellous to meet others. There's 40 of us in our residential home, but no one socialises or talks to each other. We had a coffee morning once and only eight turned up. It's great to have someone to chat to here".

While talking to Les, Ernest came over to ask Les about the mindfulness walk that was scheduled for later on in the afternoon. It was lovely to see both Members chatting to each other and sense the bonds that they were making.



Caption: Our Llandudno Centre on a starry night

Ernest was attending the introduction week with his wife Audrey. They had travelled from Tarporley in Cheshire. He was in the Royal Navy for 35 years and was diagnosed with age related macular degeneration seven years ago. They told me how they spend a lot of time on their own, but that they were thoroughly enjoying meeting the other Members. Audrey said: "Ernest has been talking more since he's been here, it's lovely to watch. It's also the military atmosphere that really helps. We're meeting others who face our challenges".

For the two days I was lucky enough to be there, I saw our veterans start to undergo a change – to forge new friendships and create new bonds that would last longer than the length of their stay at Llandudno. I was impressed at the willingness and kindness of the staff there, and how they felt at home from the start. I was sad not to see the end of their journey that week, but knew that Chris would be able to see something truly magical happening when he took over from me a day later.

Next stages by Chris

As Chris, Editor of the Review, I've attended our Centres on several occasions but this was my first time to an Introduction Week, and I wasn't too sure what to expect myself – never mind the veterans who were

taking part. I was lucky enough to be attending on the penultimate day, which featured the Celebration Meal, in which the Members could look back at the journey they'd made since they arrived at the Centre. I had been told it would be an emotional experience, and was curious to see just what was meant by that.

I was lucky enough to be staying in the Centre itself, and my room was both spotless and spacious. I envied the veterans who had been staying there all week – I'd have been more than happy there myself.

First of all it was a case of trying to find the new Members, but after combing the lounge and corridors for them it transpired they'd all gone to get ready for the dinner in a couple of hours. This left me to have a good look at the excellent facilities in the Llandudno Centre, and have a quick chat with Billy who promised me that the meal would be something special. I had little idea just how right he would be.

Come the hour, come the veterans – and at 4.30 I found myself in the Members lounge with Billy and some of the care staff and our 12 new Members. There was a buzz of conversation when I walked in – they were happily chatting to each other and laughing and several had dressed →

up for the occasion – with Frank even wearing a spotless white Tuxedo. The sense of comradeship and familiarity was lovely to see, and the anticipation for the dinner was palpable.

But before dinner could begin, there was the small matter of the bugle...

Bold as brass

One of Billy Baxter's skills is that he is the Llandudno centre's bugler in residence. As an icebreaker he likes to try out our Member's skills on the instrument, and see if they can produce a note. If you think this seems easy, it's not. It was great fun seeing our veterans try and produce a note from the instrument – and if they failed they were allowed to attempt the flugelhorn instead. Suffice to say, much hilarity was had by all to a chorus of squeaks and warbles, and by the time we were escorted to dinner, the mood was as relaxed as could be.

For the meal, the master of ceremonies was Billy, with his 'vice' being Member Trevor Handley, who at 72 was the youngest veteran on the Introduction Week.

"It's humbling for me to be part of that initial journey for you, now that you're Members of Blind Veterans UK," said Billy in his welcome, "You come here with different skills in life and that's

what makes it flourish. You've joined a family, and that's not just for this week – that's for life."

After a Grace – said by Royal Navy veteran Ernest – it was the turn of the new Members to express their feelings about how the week had been for them.

First to begin was widower George, who Laura had spoken to at the start of the week. Everyone was quiet as he began,

"One of the things we learned in the Army was not to be surprised – I didn't know what was coming, I had no idea at all, and it wasn't a good time for me. I wasn't the best of company. But the team and my colleagues have given me the support that I needed and still need.

"I didn't know what the reception was going to be here, what I was coming into and what I'd get in return for what I could put in. There's a lot I want to do, and I will come back."

George's views were echoed by husband and wife, Clarry and Ursula.

"The best bit for me was learning how blind people can be helped to cope with the various problems they have," said Clarry quietly.

"I didn't know Blind Veterans UK existed until recently, and it's taught me a lot about the kind of problems that other people in my circumstances have. I hope that a result of my being here I can go on and help other people like me."

His wife and carer Ursula was equally impressed.



Caption: Trevor gets to grips with the bugle

"I am astounded by the atmosphere here – I walked through that front door and I saw desperate people smiling. I thought I knew everything, but didn't expect the kindness and the resilience and the willingness to help other people, which is what's happening here.

"Everyone who has come with us is going away with a different outlook. It's not the end it's the beginning of a new life. Clarry's been included and they've made it easy for him to understand what's going on. I've learned a lot. Thank you."

One by one the veterans spoke out about their experiences during the week, and often there wasn't a dry eye in the house. Of the remainder who spoke, two stood out for me. The first was Ernest, who in his soft West Country burr thoughtfully said,

"The first thing I noticed is the laughter – everyone is full of laughter. And that's made a big difference, because when you lose your sight suddenly the world stops. Here I feel shocked at the information available, and the sharing of that information. You listen to us, and we listen to you and it's a great place to be. It's a sisterhood and brotherhood."

Finally it was Trevor's turn. Trevor →

is from East Yorkshire, and has the flat vowels and direct speech of that part of the country. Somehow that accent lent an extra poignancy to his words.

"The friendships I've made here will last me forever. It's just amazing. I didn't want to come, but my welfare lady kept on coming out to see me and saying 'have a go'. I live in a little village of 1,500 people, and I don't like mixing with a lot of folk – because of my eyesight I've lost my confidence. But since I've been here – five days – I'm a new man. I wouldn't have got up and spoken to you before. It's changed my life."

Billy had been right – the meal had been special. Looking around the room at the veterans, happily chatting to each other about everything from inter-service rivalry, to the archery they'd taken part in at the start of the week, you could see that they'd taken the first steps on their journey. There were no shy faces here, and everyone was included, no one was isolated or alone. As Billy had said – one big family.

Like all wonderful things, the excellent meal seemed to be over all too soon and the Members either returned to their rooms or went to the lounge for a sing song and a chat round the bar. Either way, it was a happy band of

veterans that went to bed that night, ready for the next day's activities.

Sitting down and stretching

After a week of activity, the final session for the Members involved chair-based yoga, which took place in the Falklands Room of the Centre. Under the watchful eye of instructor Shelly, eight of the veterans took to the chairs to try a variety of positions aimed at improving both their health and mental wellbeing.

From my position at side of the room, it was plain to see that those Members who took part were enjoying themselves immensely, and there were almost looks of disappointment when the hour-long session was over.

For myself and Laura, it was a privilege to be able to watch the 12 veterans flourish under the caring and shepherding staff of the Llandudno Centre. The marked difference in the people who had arrived on the Monday wasn't something that could be easily measured, but the smiles and the comradeship were plain to see, and there was a feeling that for many of those who attended, that week had shown them that not only were they not alone, but that there was a life beyond their sight loss. We wish them the best of luck in their journey with us. 🍷



Kelly

Caption: Kelly and Bethany and a mountain of cakes

A break away from it all

Lynette Denzey talked to Member Kelly Ganfield about her experience of staying in our Llandudno Centre's family accommodation

Working Age Member (WAM) Kelly Ganfield was asked to trial run an independent holiday with her family in the Leader Buildings in our Llandudno Centre.

this fabulous resource is being utilised to its full capacity, so we are actively promoting 'restorative family breaks' for those who are able to be independent with their care needs.

Blind Veterans UK wants to ensure

Getting away to an unfamiliar



environment can be difficult with a family. These specially designed visual impairment-friendly flats are tailored to cater for mobility issues, and are perfectly set up for Members to come and have a safe and relaxing break while enjoying all that Llandudno and North Wales has to offer.

You will also benefit from having the knowledge and skills of the Llandudno Centre team to help you plan and organise what you might like to get involved in while there. You can choose to self-cater, or if you would prefer to still participate in the Centre catering, you can attend the main dining room (or Hogwarts as it is known colloquially) for meals at the normal mealtimes.

Spending quality time

Holidays, whether for a long weekend or a week, can offer an opportunity to unwind from the normal strains and stresses of everyday life. It also gives you the chance to spend quality time with your family away from home.

If you feel getting away would be beneficial, or you have struggled to be able to take a family break in recent times, then please do get in touch with your Community Support Worker or WAM case manager Glynis Gillam, who can discuss further what these breaks can offer and how you could be supported to access this resource.

Capacity is limited so this will be allocated on an assessed needs basis.

Kelly, her wife Sarah, their daughter Bethany and Kelly's guide dog Archie, stayed in the Leader Buildings recently, and apparently young Bethany is now constantly asking, "When are we going back to Wales on holiday?"

Sarah drove them to Wales from their home in Wiltshire, and they were met on arrival by Paul Wynne-Williams,



Caption: Kelly and Archie at Conwy Castle

Llandudno's facilities manager, who showed them how to get into their accommodation, the "Williamson Suite", together with the car access and parking space, which conveniently was right by the apartment. Straight away Kelly said they felt comfortable and secure, explaining,

"The apartment was huge and really well equipped with everything we could possibly need for self-catering and really suited to our family needs"

Inside the spacious living area was a table with lots of brochures detailing places of interest nearby, and they used these to explore the area, visiting Conwy Castle, taking a ride on the tram, and locating parks and the beach for walks with Bethany and Archie.

Walking around the Centre, they came across the arts and crafts room where another Member was painting pottery poppies. Bethany noticed some pottery cats and asked to paint them, and they were all invited to join in, encouraged by Nadia Wazera of the health and wellbeing team. Kelly says, "It was lovely to be able to do a family activity together".

Delicious sandwiches

Bethany and her parents thought the food at the Centre was wonderful – especially the Halloween tea with

delicious sandwiches and cakes - and she was spoilt by everyone.

Bethany has cerebral palsy, so for Kelly and Sarah it was lovely to be somewhere where they knew she would be safe but could take part in activities, making it a proper and relaxing holiday for all of them.

As a bonus, Kelly recognised two Members' voices and was able to re-acquaint with Peter and his partner, when they met at Remembrance weekend in London, and with Stan, who she originally met at Buckingham Palace during our centenary celebrations. Stan had embarrassed her by asking if the Queen was there, when she was standing right in front of them. She also recognised the voice of Pierre, one of the catering staff who she had met when he worked at our Brighton centre.

So, would Kelly recommend it, to those with families? The answer is a wholehearted yes - Kelly said it could not be better.

"The atmosphere at the Centre was great, we all really enjoyed ourselves, everyone - staff, volunteers and other Members staying there - put themselves out and could not do enough for my family. We're looking forwards to coming back again soon". 🍕

Relaxed power

The ancient art of Qi-gong can help you relax and improve your health. Llandudno-based Support Worker **Jinpa Thubten** explains how it works.

Qi-gong is an ancient internal art that builds 'relaxed power'. Instead of fighting and straining like in traditional western exercises, it loosens you up and allows your energy to flow.

This is done by following a series of simple exercises that promote good health and mental wellbeing. The movements are done slowly, in time with your own breathing. If they feel easy and relaxing you are doing them

right, if they are hard and strenuous then you are doing them wrong.

Blind Veterans UK Member Tom Jones said, "Having suffered the pain of chronic arthritis over many years, particularly in the knees and shoulders, coupled with gradual deteriorating curvature of the spine, in desperation I decided to turn to Qi-gong. I wanted to ascertain whether I could benefit from gentle exercise on an ongoing basis.

"While I do admit to being dubious at first, with the aids of "Holding the Moon" and gentle exercise, I am happy to say that I now adopt a more upright stance, take longer strides and am far more confident."

How much to exercise

Aim to do two minutes a day, every day. If you do a bit longer then great, you are doing yourself good. In a perfect world you will build up gradually to 15 minutes twice a day. Remember if you have done your two minutes give yourself a great big tick on your



Caption: Grandmasters of the Shaolin Temple Shi DeRu practicing Qi-gong

SHI DERU / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

calendar, but, no banking - you can't do 10 minutes one day and nothing the next four, commit to your set two minutes to be a healthier and happier you.

This month's exercise is called **Pushing Mountains**.

You can do this exercise seated if you have poor balance, or any issues with standing unsupported. As long as you have a reasonable sense of balance you can do this exercise standing.

Seated stance

(Use a dining chair if possible).

- Feet are about hip width apart.
- Support your own back (don't lean on the chair).
- Keep your back elongated as if gently pulled from the crown of the head.
- Feet gently pushing in to floor.
- Chest open yet soft.

Standing Stance

- Feet are about hip width apart.
- Knees relaxed (slightly bent).
- Keep your coccyx (tail bone) pulled forward.
- Keep your back elongated as if pulled gently from the crown of the head.
- Weight evenly spread over the feet.
- Chest open yet soft

Pushing Mountains

- Start with your palms facing heaven, resting by your hips

- Raise your hands along the body to your shoulders as you inhale.
- Turn palms away from you.
- Push hands forward from front of shoulder forward whilst exhaling
- Bring hands back to the shoulder as you inhale.
- Repeat the gentle pushing action exhaling on the push and inhaling as the hands come back to the shoulders. (continue)
- Lower hands down your sides to finish with a gentle sigh. ☺

Important rules to follow while practicing Qi-gong

1. Be mindful - watch how your body moves and breathes, stop thinking about dinner or the telly.

2. Breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth, in a gentle sigh - like you are fogging glasses, not blowing out candles.

3. Follow the exercise - it may seem strange that this is number three but as long as the movement is relaxed it will get better with practice, so don't worry about it being perfect.

Remember to smile, it will help you relax and enjoy the movement.



Family News

Birthdays

Francis Murphy who celebrates his 100th birthday on March 20.

Roy Symons who celebrates his 101st birthday on March 22.

Marie Goodman who celebrates her 105th birthday on March 22.

Thomas Davies who celebrates his 103rd birthday on March 6.

John Beauchamp who celebrates his 100th birthday on March 3.

Frank Buttery who celebrates his 100th birthday on March 2.

Marjorie Clarke who celebrates her 101st birthday on March 9.

Clifford Shaw who celebrates his 100th birthday on March 28.

Petaï Jenkins who celebrates his 104th birthday on March 3.

John Swalwell who celebrates his 101st birthday on March 11.

Robert Bales who celebrates his 100th birthday on March 20.

Michael Leslie Kelly who celebrates his 100th birthday on March 25.

Frank Belk who celebrates his 101st birthday on March 1.

Condolences

It is with deep regret that we record the deaths of the following and we offer our heartfelt condolences.

Valmai Alexander who died on 23 January 2020. She was the wife of the late Bryan Alexander.

Patricia Archer who died on 10 January 2020. She was the wife of John Archer.

Iris Winifred Causey who died on 26 January 2020. She was the wife of the late George Causey.

Jean Clarke who died on 23 January 2020. She was the partner of the late Leslie Hillery.

Carolyn Elizabeth Colbourne who died on 31 January 2020. She was the wife of Ronald Colbourne.

Gloria Davidson who died on 12 February 2020. She was the wife of the late Walter Davidson.

Margaret Elizabeth Gray who died on 2 December 2019. She was the wife of the late James Gray.

Anita Helen Grimward who died on 29 January 2020. She was the wife of Kenneth Grimward.

Mabel Elizabeth Hill who died on 12 January 2020. She was the wife of William Hill.

Eileen Hough who died on 4 February 2020. She was the wife of the late Leslie Hough.

Margaret Illingworth who died on 10 February 2020. She was the wife of Derek Illingworth.

Margaret Naylor who died on 1 January 2020. She was the wife of the late Alan Naylor.

Joyce Oldbury who died on 3 February 2020. She was the wife of the late Henry Oldbury.

Yvonne Roddis who died on 10 February 2020. She was the wife of David Roddis.

Hazel Frances Snowden who died on 27 January 2020. She was the wife of the late Raymond Snowden.

Doreen Taylor who died on 1 December 2019. She was the wife of the late William Taylor.

Monica Waite who died on 1 February 2020. She was the wife of Cyril Waite.

Denis Watson who died on 16 January 2020. He was the husband of Barbara Watson.

Gladys Wilkins who died on 15 January 2020. She was the wife of Brian Wilkins.

Barbara Williams who died on 2 January 2020. She was the wife of Hywel Williams.

Margaret Florence Windscheffel who died on 1 January 2020. She was the wife of the late Arthur Windscheffel.



In memory

It is with deep regret that we record the deaths of the following members and we offer our heartfelt condolences to their widows, widowers, families and friends

Peter Thomas Appleby of Brighton, East Sussex died on 31 January 2020 aged 98. He served in the Royal Air Force as an L.A.C.

Keith George Arblaster of Brighton, East Sussex died on 23 January 2020 aged 98. He served in the Royal Air Force as a Corporal.

Aubrey Alan Bailey-styles of Fleet, Hampshire died on 17 January 2020 aged 94. He served as a Private in the Army Air Corps.

Eleanor Mary Baldwin of Thurso, Caithness died on 20 January 2020 aged 95. She served in the Women's Royal Naval Service as a Wren.

Ronald Ralph Baxter of Canvey Island, Essex died on 6 February 2020 aged 82. He served as a Signaller in the Royal Signals.

Julie Booth of Leicester, Leicestershire died on 13 January 2020 aged 71. She served in the Royal Air Force as a Senior Aircraftswoman.

Roy Bridges of Neston, Cheshire died on 6 February 2020 aged 93. He served as an Able Seaman in the Royal Navy.

John Cardwell of Liverpool died on 27 December 2019 aged 94. He served in the Royal Air Force as a Flight Engineer.

David Cassie of Folkestone, Kent died on 16 December 2019 aged 88. He served in the Royal Air Force as a S.A.C.

Francis Karam Chand of London died on 27 January 2020 aged 91. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Engineers.

Bernard Winston Cox of Mansfield, Nottinghamshire died on 28 January 2020 aged 84. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

Albert Dalley of Spalding, Lincolnshire died on 24 January 2020 aged 74. He served as a Corporal in the R.A.O.C and R.E.M.E.

Ronald Dawkins of Cowes, Isle of Wight died on 2 December 2019 aged 91. He served as a Private in the General Service Corps.

Marion Kathleen Dawson of Wells-next-the-sea, Norfolk died on 13 January 2020 aged 97. She served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force as an L.A.C.W.

Colin Dennis of Doncaster, South Yorkshire died on 14 January 2020 aged 88. He served as a Craftsman in the R.E.M.E.

John Devine of Reading died on 6 February 2020 aged 87. He served as a Warrant Officer 1st Class in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

Patrick Downey of London died on 19 January 2020 aged 84. He served as a Corporal in the Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment.

John Robert Doyle of Dyserseth, Denbighshire died on 15 February 2020 aged 94. He served as a Fusilier in the Royal Welch Fusiliers.

Reginald James Dray of Newport, Gwent died on 28 January 2020 aged 95. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Army Service Corps.

Albert Farrington of Middlewich Cheshire died on 26 January 2020 aged 89. He served as a Driver in the Royal Army Service Corps.

Thomas Fisher of Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbrightshire died on 1 February 2020 aged 97. He served as a Flight Sergeant in the Royal Air Force.

Norman Freeman of London died on 25 December 2019 aged 96. He served as a Sergeant in the Royal Air Force.



George Victor Goodchild of Sandy, Bedfordshire died on 1 January 2020 aged 100. He served as a Driver in the Royal Indian Army Service Corps.

Dorothy Pamela Goodger of Warminster, Wiltshire died on 1 January 2020 aged 96. She served as a Flight Lieutenant in the Women's Royal Air Force.

Joan Grabham of Middlesbrough, Cleveland died on 1 February 2020 aged 99. She served in the Royal Navy Fleet as a Wren.

Ernest Gerald Green of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire died on 5 February 2020 aged 90. He served as a Corporal in the General Service Corps.

Ronald Charles Grocock of Scunthorpe, South Humberside died on 19 January 2020 aged 94. He served as a Seaman in the Royal Navy.

John Hanley of Brighton died on 14 January 2020 aged 101. He served as a Sergeant in the Royal Air Force.

George Harker of North Shields, Tyne and Wear died on 11 February 2020 aged 88. He served as a Driver in the Royal Army Service Corps.

Terence George of Hatton Tredegar, Gwent died on 12 February 2020 aged 75. He served as a Trooper in the Royal Tank Regiment.

William Haynes of Tavistock, Devon died on 1 February 2020 aged 91. He served as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Corps of Transport.

Michael Arnold Heap of Wolverhampton died on 14 January 2020 aged 85. He served in the Royal Air Force as an S.A.C.

Trevor Hills of Haverfordwest, Dyfed died on 19 January 2020 aged 99. He served as Corporal in the Royal Engineers.

Kenneth Holman of Knottingley, West Yorkshire died on 1 January 2020 aged 79. He served as a Driver in the Royal Army Service Corps.

Denys Hunter of Southampton, Hampshire died on 15 February 2020 aged 95. He served as a Private in the Hertfordshire Regiment.

Leslie Sydney Ives of Tavistock, Devon died on 11 February 2020 aged 89. He served as a Private in the Yorkshire and Lancashire Regiment.

John Malcolm Henry Jamieson of Rochester, Kent died on 12 January 2020 aged 92. He served as a Sick Berth Attendant in the Royal Navy.

John Kearns of St. Helens, Merseyside died on 29 January 2020 aged 87. He served in the Royal Air Force as a A.C. 1.

James Keat of St. Austell, Cornwall died on 21 December 2019 aged 95. He served in the Royal Navy as a Petty Officer Radio Mechanic.

William Kennedy of Peebles died on 17 December 2019 aged 87. He served in the Royal Air Force as a Leading Aircraftman.

John Henry Kirk of Nottingham died on 14 January 2020 aged 76. He served in the Army Catering Corps.

Robert Gifford Knight of Bridport, Dorset died on 12 January 2020 aged 92. He served as a Trooper in the Royal Armoured Corps.

Peter William Francis Lamb of Grantham Lincolnshire died on 31 January 2020 aged 98. He served as a Major in the Parachute Regiment.

Margaret Lambert of Winslow, Buckingham died on 17 January 2020 aged 100. She served in the Women's Royal Naval Service as a Chief Petty Officer.

Alexander Lambie of Glasgow died on 26 December 2019 aged 93. He served as a Private in the Royal Army Service Corps.

Marjorie Esther Larter of Dunstable, Bedfordshire died on 9 February 2020 aged 96. She served as a Private in the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

Ernest Lester of Nottingham died on 22 January 2020 aged 95. He served as a Private in the Home Guard.

Frederick Paul Lester of Hartlepool, Cleveland died on 1 January 2020 aged 87. He served as a Soldier in the Army.

William Wallace Lucas of Sunderland, Tyne and Wear died on 9 December 2019 aged 90. He served as a Private in the Durham Light Infantry.

Harry Marshall of Poulton-le-fylde, Lancashire died on 1 December 2019 aged 98. He served in the Royal Air Force as an Aircraftman 1st class.

Gordon Harry Martin of Ipswich died on 22 December 2019 aged 95. He served in the Royal Navy as a Seaman.

Ernest Lindsay McGill of Ellesmere Port, Cheshire died on 9 February 2020 aged 96. He served as a Corporal in the General Service Corps.

Edwin William Millin of Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire died on 14 January 2020 aged 95. He served in the Royal Air Force as an A.C. 1.

Robert Morgan of Stourbridge, West Midlands died on 18 January 2020 aged 88. He served in the Royal Air Force as an S.A.C.

Richard Eric Mountain of Chippenham, Wiltshire died on 27 December 2019 aged 85. He served in the Royal Air Force as an S.A.C.

Leslie Arthur Nicholls of West Bromwich, West Midlands died on 1 December 2019 aged 90. He served as a Private in the Royal Army Service Corps.

James Nuttall of Colchester died on 3 February 2020 aged 96. He served as a Trooper in the Royal Armoured Corps.

William Oldham of Coventry died on 6 February 2020 aged 92. He served as a Private in the General Service Corps.

Gerald Keith Parfitt of Exeter, Devon died on 4 February 2020 aged 95. He served as an Air Mechanic in the Royal Navy.

Edmund James Parker of Holyhead, Gwynedd died on 2 February 2020 aged 86. He served as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers.

Marie Penfold of Durham died on 3 January 2020 aged 85. She served as a Leading Aircraftwomen in the Women's Royal Air Force.

Kenneth William Phillips of Haverfordwest, Dyfed died on 24 January 2020 aged 79. He served as a Sergeant in the Royal Artillery.

William Edward Prescott of Isle of Man died on 10 January 2020 aged 91. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Royal Military Police.

Wilfred James Price of Bournemouth died on 1 February aged 95. He served as an Able Seaman in the Royal Navy.

John Proctor of Billingham, Cleveland died on 1 January 2020 aged 93. He served as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers.

Nellie May Robertson of Sidcup, Kent died on 13 January 2020 aged 97. She served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force.

Thomas Gaines Robinson of Darlington, County Durham died on 23 December 2019 aged 97. He served as a Sergeant in the Royal Artillery.

Yvonne Kendrick Roddis of Cromer, Norfolk died on 10 February 2020 aged 95. She served in the Women's Royal Naval Service as a Leading Wren.

David Keith Roose of London died on 14 January 2020 aged 87. He served as a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Army Service Corps.

Dennis Ross of Wrexham, Clwyd died on 23 January 2020 aged 82. He served as a Signaller in the Royal Signals.

Leslie Round of Evesham, Worcestershire died on 1 December 2019 aged 94. He served as an Able Seaman in the Royal Navy.

Gordon David Russell of Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire died on 1 January 2020 aged 84. He served as a Chief Technician in the Royal Air Force.

Ernest Sage of Bexhill-on-sea, East Sussex died on 25 January 2020 aged 88. He served as a Private in the Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment).

Percy Sargeant of Cannock, Staffordshire died on 20 January 2020 aged 90. He served as a Private in the Royal Tank Regiment.

Joseph Sayers of Hinckley, Leicestershire died on 2 February 2020 aged 99. He served as an L.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

George James Sheppard of Spalding, Lincolnshire died on 18 December 2019 aged 89. He served as an Able Seaman in the Royal Navy.

John Simcock of Abergele, Clwyd died on 17 January 2020 aged 94. He served as a Leading Stores Assistant in the Royal Navy.

Kenneth Simons of Tavistock, Devon died on 2 February 2020 aged 99. He served as a Sick Berth Attendant in the Royal Navy.

Peggy Sleeman of Budleigh Salterton, Devon died on 21 January 2020 aged 98. She served as a Sergeant in the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

Harold Duncan Smart of Kenilworth, Warwickshire died on 2 February 2020 aged 87. He served as a Senior Aircraftsman in the Royal Air Force.

David Christopher Squire of Darlington, County Durham died on 1 January 2020 aged 96. He served as a Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers.

In Memory

William Stammers of Bexleyheath, Kent died on 19 January 2020 aged 85. He served as a Sergeant in the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment).

Audrey Stevens of Melksham, Wiltshire died on 5 February 2020 aged 96. She served as a Private in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

Edna Grace Sullivan of Pinner, Middlesex died on 31 January 2020 aged 98. She served as a Staff Sergeant in the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

Edward Norman Swainston of Swaffham, Norfolk died on 1 February 2020 aged 82. He served in the Royal Air Force as an L.A.C.

Kenneth Mark Tarbox of Slough, Berkshire died on 13 January 2020 aged 90. He served as a Driver in the General Service Corps.

Brian Abbott Taylor of Stockport, Cheshire died on 31 January 2020 aged 91. He served as an Able Seaman in the Royal Navy.

Michael Valentine-Richards of Wakefield, West Yorkshire died on 10 December 2019 aged 78. He served as a Musician in the Grenadier Guards.

Kenneth Wall of Bradford, West Yorkshire died on 1 December 2019 aged 80. He served as a Private in the Royal Pioneer Corps.

Stella Margaret Warden of Canterbury, Kent died on 13 January 2020 aged 87. She served as a Wren in the Royal Navy.

Derek White of St. Albans, Hertfordshire died on 24 January 2020 aged 85. He served as an S.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

Arthur Leslie Wignall of Llandudno, Gwynedd died on 1 February 2020 aged 100. He served as a Sergeant in the Royal Army Service Corps.

Joseph Wilson of Liverpool died on 6 January 2020 aged 94. He served as an Able Seaman in the Royal Navy.

Trevor Arthur Woodward of Bournemouth, Dorset died on 30 December 2019 aged 91. He served as a Guardsman in the Coldstream Guards.



Trooping the Colour ballot for tickets

The Queen's Birthday Parade

Saturday 13 June 2020, 10.00am - 12.25pm at
Horse Guards Parade, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2AX

Blind Veterans UK have an allocation of 20 tickets for Trooping the Colour. Due to high demand, tickets will be drawn by ballot, two tickets per Member.

If you wish to be included in the ballot, please call Akvile Jukneviute on 0207 616 7998 by Wednesday 1 April 2020.



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For more information:

email Akvile.Jukneviute@blindveterans.org.uk
Call 0207 616 7998

Let your creativity shine!

Be part of our 2020 fifth annual Exhibition Fundraiser - beginners, hobby artists, experts and have a go artists are all welcome.

Members are invited to participate in a fundraising exhibition on the theme of 'Landscape', to be held at the Brighton Centre from 12-30 October. Whether you want to produce landscapes, seascapes or cityscapes, the world is your oyster.

Members may enter one piece of 2D artwork which must have been created especially for the exhibition. It could be a painting, collage, drawing, textiles



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- anything that is a flat piece of framed artwork that can be hung on the wall.

The artwork will be offered for sale by online auction with funds raised benefitting the Charity. Prizes will be awarded for audience favourites on 23 October.

■ **If you are interested in taking part please request the terms and conditions and an entry form from Dave Bryant, Art & Craft Instructor in person, by e-mail, phone or post at david.bryant@blindveterans.org.uk, 01273 391 466 or Art & Craft Workshop, Blind Veterans UK, Greenways, Ovingdean, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 7BS.**

Please arrange delivery of your artwork to Dave on or before Tuesday 1 September, 2020. Entries must be accompanied by a fully completed, signed and dated entry form to comply with GDPR rules.

■ **Any enquires should be made to Lou Kirk-Partridge, Rehab Lead Art & Craft at louise.kirk-partridge@blindveterans.org.uk or 01273 391 458**

Contact details

Contact address Blind Veterans UK,
12-14 Harcourt Street, London, W1H
4HD, **0300 111 22 33**

Member Support Hub: 01273 391 447

New Members: If you know someone who could be eligible to join Blind Veterans UK, they can phone our Membership Department on freephone **0800 389 7979**.

The Brighton Centre 01273 307 811.

The Llandudno Centre 01492 868 700.

The Booking Office for the Brighton Centre: To book accommodation at the Brighton Centre please telephone **01273 391 500**. If you have care needs please first contact your Team Leader or Community Support Worker (CSW).

The Booking Office for the Llandudno Centre: To book accommodation at the Llandudno Centre please telephone **01492 868 700** for bookings and ask for the Booking office. If you have care needs please first contact your Team Leader or CSW.

Review Editor: You can telephone Chris Gilson on **020 7616 8367** or email him at revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk



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We value your feedback and use it to improve and develop the services we provide. If you would like to provide feedback on the magazine or any aspect of our services then please email us at feedback@blindveterans.org.uk or call **0300 111 22 33**

A different format?

If you would like your copy of Review in a different format, then please contact your Community Support Worker or ROVI for more information.

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Victory Over Blindness

Commemorative silver coin
Drawing inspiration from our iconic Victory over Blindness statue, Blind Veterans UK has struck a special limited edition coin dedicated to its first blind veterans.

Minted in hallmarked sterling silver, the coins are numbered to a run of 3,017 pieces.

Exquisitely packaged, each coin features a plaque dedicated to an individual soldier, sailor or airman who was blinded in the First World War and helped by us.

To order your coin, please contact **Customer Services** on **0300 111 22 33**.



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